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VIRGIN ISLANDS, U.S.A.

ISSUE EDITORS: *Ethel J. Alpenfels, Alberta Wallen
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PART I:

The Workshop Approach to Education

The workshop as an approach to educational problems is not new. It is only within the past few years, however, that educators have been experimenting with the plan of moving classes away from the campus and transplanting them into an area where problems might be studied at their source. Such was the purpose when New York University's Department of Educational Sociology under Dr. Harvey Zorbaugh chose for its laboratory in social anthropology the American Virgin Islands. It was felt that these three islands presented an almost unparalleled and untouched laboratory for group and individual study of "the peoples of the world". There students might find ethnic traditions and cultural patterns different from those with which they were familiar and might pursue their summer classes with the highest degree of participation and experience in the life of the community.

With Professor Ethel J. Alpenfels as Coordinator fifty-four students from the continental United States and eleven Virgin Islands teachers made their headquarters on the island of St. Thomas for a period of six weeks during the summer of 1950. In addition to a faculty of four members recruited from other fields than anthropology, the group

had the unexcelled opportunity to work with the foremost leaders of the islands: Governor DeCastro and his administrative family, the Commissioners of Health, Education, Social Welfare and Police; members of the Council in St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. In addition, community leaders in social service, labor, economics, business, the arts, to mention only a few, who gave freely of their time in providing the workshop with resource leaders and entrance into the many activities of the island life.

The entire workshop has asked the Editors to extend to all of those who acted as discussion leaders, speakers, or consultants as well as to the scores of native islanders who welcomed us as friends and helped us to widen our perspective — their most sincere "thanks."

For those who read the articles included in this issue of *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, we would like to say that we do not intend this issue to be a research project. Our stay of six weeks was too short to do any more than raise a series of questions to be answered at some later date. Our purpose is studying for one summer in the Virgin Islands was to know another group of our American citizens better and to have the opportunity to live together as a small community practising democratic organization in an intergroup setting. Our editorial aim in this issue is to highlight some of the problems of an overseas workshop, to suggest a few solutions, and to appraise some of the impressions and activities which have given us insight into our own prejudices and a new perspective in the field of human relations.

With these aims in view, the JOURNAL has been divided into three parts. Part I is devoted to administrative problems in setting-up an overseas workshop; Part II deals with the Community as a Laboratory; Part III brings together the aspects that we have called Cultural Highlights in the Virgin Islands.

The Editors

WHY A WORKSHOP TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS?

Ethel J. Alpenfels

Our American Virgin Islands—St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John — were chosen as the base for the first field trip in social anthropology for several reasons. From the first it seemed wise to choose a territory that belonged to the United States. Alaska, Samoa, Hawaii, and the Aleutian Islands were all considered, but their distance from continental United States made their choice financially prohibitive. In Puerto Rico a fine workshop sponsored by the New York City Board of Education and New York University was already in progress. The Virgin Islands, therefore, 1,440 miles southeast of New York and approximately nine and one-half hours by plane from New York City, were close enough to keep transportation costs to a minimum. This was important for the choice of student membership in an overseas workshop should depend upon other factors than simply the ability to pay for the trip.

The desire to study in one of our territories grew out of the feeling that professional people in the States would best gain an appreciation of the many problems faced by citizens from outside our geographical borders through face-to-face contact and the direct experience of living among them in their homeland. There are almost as many Virgin Islanders living in metropolitan New York as now live on the island of St. Thomas. Their children are attending public schools and colleges here and, like the children from so many other cultural and ethnic groups, they live between the two worlds—between the patterns of the small and intimate folk society of their homes and the large, impersonal patterns of metropolitan life. In such a situation it is the children who suffer most. We believed that teachers, social workers, nurses—representatives of the many institutions who deal with problems of adjustment professionally—

could best learn the way of life in a simpler society by sharing it for six weeks. The problems of the Virgin Islands are no different than those of other insular people who have felt the impact of that great steamroller we like to call "civilization." In the Virgin Islands we hoped to see reflected patterns of our own way of life, to be able to examine cultural elements and cultural conflicts that are universal, and to try to do this objectively in a setting different from the American scene.

One task of anthropology is to scale down this complex world in which we live into smaller units that we can understand. One way to do this is to provide a laboratory that is small enough and different enough to develop insights into the economic, political, religious, educational and artistic institutions. St. Thomas, with the city of Charlotte Amalie as the seat of government, combines the old world culture with the new world problems. Six nations have at different times dominated the island life—by right of discovery, settlement, conquest, or purchase—and each one has left its impress upon the culture and upon the people. The result is a strange blending of influences reflected in the customs, the beliefs, the laws, the material traits, and the total way of life of this cosmopolitan island. For generations English has been the major language (although Denmark owned the islands for two hundred and fifty years) and one of the elements that forms a barrier in other West Indian islands was not present in these islands. Here, too, people of many races, nationalities, religions and socio-economic groups live and work together. Education is the major key to social and political advancement, but social class distinctions—part European, part American—are woven into the fabric of daily living. A wise government and an articulate opposition are working together to provide the economic, social, and legislative controls that may achieve cultural pluralism in a setting where waves of tourists might easily change the city of Charlotte Amalie into a miniature 42nd

Street. Because so little has been written about the Virgin Islands it represented a rich and almost unexplored field for research, but a brief, six-week visit to the Islands would not make it likely that we would be able to add any historical or scientific discoveries. But we did feel that in going outside the limits of the traditional classroom setting we might search for educational and cultural concepts and facts unhampered by previous dicta. If cultural anthropology is indeed concerned with principles, generalizations and hypotheses applicable to any group of people, then we should be able to carry over what we knew about our own society to one less well known. Our major concern, however, was for individual growth by means of an unusual educational opportunity among the friendliest and kindest people it has ever been my privilege to know.

ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

The success or failure of an overseas workshop may very well rest upon preplanning—in both the academic field and the area of financing. The question immediately arises of determining how much preplanning is necessary to keep the program elastic enough to permit changes in activities, yet structured enough to give direction and a positive overall program.

One concrete example of too rigid planning is clearly illustrated in the control and handling of our finances. Directors from other workshops abroad advised us to call upon governmental bureaus for housing and transportation facilities while in the islands and to use a commercial agency only in arranging transportation from the United States. We decided, however, to enlarge the responsibilities of the agency so that we might put business matters into the hands of the expert and thus separate the academic from the financial responsibilities. The function of a travel agency in financial preplanning—as in all other preplanning—is to facilitate, not structure the activities of the workshop.

Those who may be planning a workshop outside of continental United States may find the following suggestions helpful in guiding financial and business arrangements:

- 1) A summer workshop is very different from a student tour where frequent changes of lodging necessitate cooperation with a travel agency. In a summer session workshop the place of residence is permanent for the six-weeks period. Government agencies are both willing and eager to assume responsibility for the choice of hotel, or local means of transportation: buses, taxis, or sailboats. In this case, the managements of these various businesses feel their primary allegiance to the workshop group rather than to an agent from whom they might hope for further contracts.
- 2) One member of the staff might be hired to handle all business arrangements during the life of the course. He can be bonded to act as a liaison person between the group and those who are facilitating the activities. He must, however, remain responsible to the faculty and to the students. All bills should be paid when the course finishes otherwise months may pass before an accounting is made.
- 3) Make the budget elastic enough to take care of contingencies that are bound to arise.

Preplanning in the academic area is equally important. Our approach was to divide the day into two parts: the morning sessions from 9:00 to 1:00 were devoted to *subject matter groups*: psychology, anthropology, history, and sociology discussions; *interest groups*: social welfare, the arts, folklore and mythology, labor problems, government, juvenile delinquency, and commerce and industry; *individual projects*: a testing program with young children, writing a cook book, helping in the recreational program or serving the hospital, to mention only a few of the projects undertaken. The evening seminars from 8:00 to 10:30 highlighted the sociological, economic and political picture of the Virgin Islands. We are indebted to all of the lecturers and discussion leaders who gave so much time and effort to the program. Afternoons were left free for visits, shop-

ping, swimming, and small group field trips. Small groups toured the islands, accompanied by Mr. Nelthropp on botanical trips, or visited the boys' home, the leprosy colony, or the agricultural station.

Before leaving the United States plans were made so that each student would spend one week in St. Croix, an agricultural island very different from St. Thomas, three days in St. John, and one or two days in the British Virgin Island Tortolla. The stays on each of these islands were carefully planned so that orientation classes and lectures would make them more than just sight-seeing tours. This is important but very difficult to arrange in so short a stay. Comparison of the different economic patterns, a chance to carry through an unexpected archaeological "dig," participation in one of the British festivals on Tortolla, and attendance at Council meetings dealing with economic matters—all provided an opportunity to know and understand the history as well as the daily round of life.

Plans were made with New York University's Film Library for a series of films were sent down which would illustrate other cultural patterns. Miss Celia Anderson of the Film Library led discussions on the use of films for educational purposes.

CHOICE OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY

In the selection of both students and faculty, an attempt was made to choose as widely as possible in terms of educational and professional backgrounds, with various religious, national, racial, and regional groups represented. In our student body approximately fifty were teachers from elementary, secondary and college level including supervisors and principals, four were nurses, three home economists, a free-lance writer, an artist, a dancer, a practising psychotherapist, an owner of a beauty parlor. The age range included students from 17 to 73 years old. Thirty colleges from the United States and Europe were represented and the course was accredited in the summer session of New

York University School of Education for six points in undergraduate work and 8 points at the graduate level.

The faculty, similarly, were chosen from both continental United States and the Virgin Islands and represented various racial, religious, and professional backgrounds. We were especially fortunate in securing Mr. Antonio Jarvis, leading historian, poet, and artist from the Islands to lecture and give individual help in his special fields and Mrs. Eldra Shulterbrandt, a staff member of the Mental Hygiene Clinic in the Islands, in the field of psychology. New York University was represented by Paul Sheldon, sociology, Mrs. Betty Grayson as Administrative Assistant, and myself in the field of anthropology. Miss Mimi Rubinstein served as secretary to keep a running record of all class sessions, lectures, and discussions which proved to be invaluable during our final evaluation sessions of the last week in the Islands.

CONCLUSION

Overseas Workshops are becoming more and more significant as colleges and universities face their responsibilities in orienting students and professional people at the graduate level to the problems we face today. Leadership which our nation now has on the international level must go hand-in-hand with responsibility both at home and abroad. One way in which teachers and other community leaders can gain a perspective on their responsibilities is through face-to-face contact with societies which have differing cultural values. Only as we gain perspective can we have understanding and, only as we have understanding, will we be able to participate effectively in building a secure people here at home.

Ethel J. Alpenfels is Associate Professor of Education, New York University, and Co-ordinator of the Department of Sociology's first field trip to the Virgin Islands.

USE OF FILMS IN A WORKSHOP ABROAD

Celia M. Anderson

The New York University Workshop on Cultural Anthropology in the Virgin Islands during the past summer was organized originally without consideration for a film program. Such a program was instituted and carried out for the last three weeks of the six-week period. The original plan, however, had included discussion of the value of photography for recording the events of the Workshop and committees were set up early to plan motion picture films and still photographs and for the making of colored slides.

The results of this first Workshop in terms of the value of films and other visual aids in future planning show the need for an organized program having two general objectives: 1, film showings to facilitate the study of the cultural group under observation; and 2, photographic records of the workshop experience itself.

There are few films which have been made expressly for the study of anthropology and most of those produced are in the hands of the people who made them. These are often amateur in quality and consist of records of experience which may be of definite value to their owners but require editing, titling or soundtracks to increase their value for others. In the *Educational Film Guide*, an authoritative listing of educational films, anthropology as a heading does not appear. In general, therefore, films in the field must be selected from material originally intended for other purposes than the study of anthropology itself.

For example, there are no films which treat of the Virgin Islands anthropology. The Workshop, therefore, experimented with a program of films on China, Japan, Africa, etc. for the purpose of showing cultural differences and similarities. Emphasis was placed on films

devoted to family life in various cultural areas.

This aspect of the film program might well place its emphasis on developing the power among students for visual observation through films which might on the spot be specifically related to the observation of the culture being visited. Cultural anthropology is essentially a study of behavior and the conclusions to be drawn from such study. The Workshop student observes behavior in a foreign setting under certain limited conditions and for a specified time. He tends to base his observation largely in terms of his own background, his own culture. He is ordinarily not a trained observer. If he is to observe the new with some degree of accuracy and objectivity it would seem pertinent to introduce to him films describing his own culture as well as films of other cultures. It might not be amiss therefore, to view films on the pattern of American family life in the setting in which a strange culture provides contrasting family patterns. Films which show visual experience of psychological processes are especially valuable because they depart from verbal expression of, say, rejection, and present this concept in living terms. Films of this nature, then, would serve to bridge the gap from verbal textbook concepts to the visual observation of such concepts in a living culture. Such a program would include not only films on the development of man like *FINGERS AND THUMBS* and *MONKEY INTO MAN*, and films directly concerned with other peoples in various parts of the world, but would include films in such fields as child development and psychology. In fact, it is doubtful whether any field of study exists which could not conceivably furnish a film or two of related interest to the activities of a student group devoted to the study of man. Specifically, the function of film in such a Workshop would tend to enrich the powers of observation of students when face to face with their material, new and complex as it inevitably is.

The other aspect of a visual aids program is in the direc-

tion of recording the experiences of the Workshop. It is obvious that plans should be made in advance so that all students equipped with camera, both motion picture and still, do not waste footage in random shooting. The experience of the past summer would seem to indicate that in addition to special interests on the part of some students, assignments should be made somewhat rigidly to assure coverage of activities. The amateur photographer tends to be general rather than specific and allowances must be made for his love of scenery and his tourist sense. It is, of course, impossible to estimate in advance what situation will tend to have photographic significance, but the film committee has an opportunity to learn not only what is good film but that what is good film is the result of good observation. The film committee, therefore, might profitably use film showings for their own purposes in addition to purposes of such showings in the general work of the group. A by-product would be the examination of the films technically under guidance.

The use of films is, then, closely related to the development of objective and accurate observation. It is easy to look at films describing human behavior. It is somewhat more difficult to become aware of the significance of such behavior. It requires considerably more of the observer to look at life and to draw valid conclusions from the complexity of facts presented. The film can do little more than to explore aspects of life, but because it does so visually (and audially) it tends to approximate life and to sharpen those faculties involved in the study of behavior. When students carry the experience of observation one step further and record what they see on film they are not so likely to produce good film (indeed in the light of the high degree of skill involved in film making, the contrary is probably inevitable) but the results are in the direction of greater objective skill in the study under consideration.

Celia Anderson is Film Librarian at New York University and Instructor in the Department of Communications.

PART II

THE COMMUNITY AS A LABORATORY

The anthropologist interested in social patterns, whether he lives among New Yorkers, Africans of the Gold Coast or the peoples of the Virgin Islands, turns to the institutions as the most fruitful source for his study. It is not the structure but the functions of these institutions that become more important. It is here that he may see the social processes through which the people have developed a unique culture. In this section, "The Community as a Laboratory" the Journal has drawn from the many experiences of both native Islanders and members of the workshop, the observations and impressions in a few sample areas.

An historian describes the native of his homeland. Antonio Jarvis knows the Virgin Islands well and writes understandingly of his people. He implies that much is to be considered before efforts are made to change the "Islander" into something alien to the environment.

It is with these native people in their daily relationships that the workshop group lived. Through the excerpts of some of their findings a picture is drawn of the social values and aspirations in the island culture. The wide spread of interest within the group permitted the investigation of many institutions. These included the family, the hospitals and health agencies, the government with its related departments of the police and courts, communications, churches, schools, and other social agencies.

Since a large percentage of the visiting students were members of the teaching profession, the educational facilities commanded much interest. A careful study was made of the many factors which play a part in the development of children. Contacts were made with administrators, civil and religious authorities, island teachers and

parents. A special effort was made to go directly to the children themselves in an attempt to understand the concepts and attitudes which the youth hold as a result of these influences. In reporting on the schools, emphasis is focused upon the extent to which the educational needs of the community are being met successfully.

The family, which is the most important institution in any society, in these islands has a structure which differs from that within the Continental United States. The Godmother concept is necessary to an understanding of the functioning of this primary group. An examination of the Godmother's influence reveals the far-reaching effects that this concept exerts upon the many facets of the social pattern.

Although these island communities are small, a complete appreciation of the interactions within this society can only be fully realized by a study of the peripheral groups of the French Village in St. Thomas, the comparatively isolated settlements on St. John and the Crusians in St. Croix. Of these bordering groups, St. John exemplifies the most remote and simplest of the American Virgin Islands.

THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Antonio Jarvis

There is really no such thing as typical American Virgin Islanders, for they are so complex and so variable that classification of the group is next to impossible. Yet since all of the people share certain general beliefs, cultural and recreational habits, superstitions, and economic practices, as well as bound by race and history into a loose whole, an attempt is sometimes made to speak of "the people of the Virgin Islands" with some degree of success.

When we except the French Villagers, who are white and live apart, and the Puerto Ricans, who are just coming in, we remain with a group of people of Negro descent, varying in color from Nordic white to Ashanti black. The women are well proportioned for the most part; many hard working ones are of graceful carriage and easy stride; the young people need only the proper gowns to surpass famed beauties in physical appearance. The men folk are frequently above middle height, clean limbed and strong, though not noted for endurance. They are good workers when their employers probe beneath the surface and try to understand their peculiar psychology. The children of this generation might have been taken from Harlem and set down in the tropics, and when they are set into Harlem life they have few adjustments to make.

It may be truthfully said of the Virgin Islanders that they are very imitative, adaptable, and self-possessed, in contrast with people of the larger leeward and windward islands. A St. Thomian or Crucian has the ability to lose himself in a London crowd, or in the San Francisco waterfront and become for the moment one of the people of that section. He will speak like a Cockney, or like a Connecticut Yankee upon occasion. Perhaps his background has made it easy for him to learn languages and he avails himself of

every opportunity to acquire some alien tongue, much to the wonderment of foreigners who are often astonished at meeting natives conversant with German, French, Spanish, Russian, Dutch and Danish.

On the whole the people of the Virgin Islands are kind-hearted and neighborly.

It is so easy to borrow money that no pawnshops exist in any town. People have not the slightest hesitation in sharing their very little with others, especially children, and it is the proud boast of the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands that no stranger can starve among them.

Unlike in Haiti, where pure Negroes feel themselves superior to the mixed people, everything lighter than black has an ascending value, and mere hue can substitute wealth, culture, and official position, so that social life among the colored people is one continued round of striving to get into inner circles even through not very commendable means. It is always assumed that a colored person from abroad belongs to a higher type of social plane than well-known colored people at home. This is truly the land of strangers.

Since the great exodus to North America within the last twenty-five years, there has grown a feeling that connection with the United States is equivalent to social improvement, and everyone boasts proudly of his relatives in Washington, Chicago or Brooklyn, and elsewhere. He does not know that too frequently those well-recommended family connections are overworked menials suffering under handicaps of race that the caste system of home can not equal. When these people return they carry their heads high and scorn the humbler ones who have been unable to make the great pilgrimage.

The people of the Virgin Islands are becoming Americanized to a certain degree, but this Americanization is superimposed upon the habit patterns of the past. It is a splendid veneer which looks like the real thing. Perhaps

the next generation will be entirely different from the people twenty years of age today, and it is conceivable that the American virtues will be developed to the extent of making these happy-go-lucky people hustling and industrious. Yet one wonders if it is really necessary to make the Virgin Islander over into something alien to the environment. It seems as though uprooting his beliefs, jarring him into the electrical age, substituting machinery for hand labor, and speeding up his mental processes, are not the very best things for his complete happiness. When he is made into something like a black Manhattanite, or a denizen of Birmingham he will lose all of his uniqueness and present another problem to the people of the United States.

Antonio Jarvis is Historian, Artist, Writer and Elementary School Principal in Charlotte Amalie, Virgin Islands.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Alberta Wallen and Constance Staples

It is a stimulating experience to leave one's own community and travel to a totally different environment. Perhaps the greatest value to the educator is the gaining of a new perspective regarding universal professional problems. Many of us live in industrial centers where life in itself is so complicated any problem seems gigantic because of its implications for the total social structure. Due to the rather simple social life on these islands, educational problems can be brought into sharp focus for study and solution.

In the study of Educational Opportunities for Youth in the American Virgin Islands the students set up the following plan of action. The school personnel were to be interviewed to obtain information in regard to the number of children in the schools, the holding power of the high school, types and adequacy of buildings and materials,

teacher training and certification and curriculum. Citizens not connected with the schools were to be contacted for their opinions of the school system. Children were to be observed and tested. Civic leaders were to be asked whether the schools adequately prepared students for citizenship in the local communities. This report will be an attempt to summarize the data thus obtained.

In these islands approximately 85% of the population can read and write the English language so the objectives of education far exceed those of mere literacy. The goals for which they strive are those common to the schools on the continent. They are directed as training for happy, efficient living, responsible citizenship in a democracy and vocational adaptation to employment opportunities. Let us consider some of the handicaps to education in this area.

The most conspicuous educational problem in the Virgin Islands is the inadequacy of funds to provide proper school buildings and equipment and to attract properly qualified teachers. The public schools are housed chiefly in buildings originally designed for other than school purposes. In all instances they are inadequate as to size and lack proper sanitary and playground facilities. The former Marine barracks and a group of auxiliary buildings accommodate the Charlotte Amalie High School which has an enrollment of eight hundred students. The main building was originally built more than a century ago as barracks for Danish gendarmes. The vocational activities of this school are located on government-owned premises about two blocks distant from the main high school center. To accommodate the elementary school enrollment in the city, all primary rooms are operated on a double shift schedule, the nine public schools in St. Croix and the four rural schools on St. John are as inadequate for a modern school program as are those on the larger island.

The salary scale for teachers is too low to attract applicants from away and more important perhaps, the native

teachers cannot afford to leave the islands for further training. The present minimum requirements for a permanent certificate is graduation from high school plus one year post-high school training. The median of teacher's training now is high school graduation plus approximately one year post-high school training. Of the one hundred sixty teachers, seventy-nine percent have no training beyond high school graduation. Some have as little education as successful completion of the seventh grade. There are at present college extension courses provided by the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico during the summer as well as during the school year. There are a limited number of scholarships and loans for teachers to study in Puerto Rico and the United States. The workshop was privileged to have had as members teachers from both St. Thomas and St. Croix who contributed greatly to our understanding of the people and their problems.

The annual per pupil cost of education is \$79.62 in St. Thomas and St. John and \$52.59 in St. Croix. This provides a fairly good supply of textbooks. Any other instructional aids are virtually non-existent; furniture and other equipment is insufficient or is in dilapidated condition.

Not all the children of the islands attend the public schools. Approximately two thousand are students of the private and parochial schools of St. Thomas and St. Croix. These schools do not receive government aid other than federal funds for school lunch programs but their support from parents and the church provides more adequate supplies than are found in the public schools. However, the number of children in classes far exceed the teacher-pupil ratio in the public schools.

The community views the schools rather critically. There was a strong feeling that the children were not being prepared for life on the islands. Many view with alarm the fact that there are more St. Thomians in New York City than in Charlotte Amalie. They expressed the opinion

that more trades should be taught in the high school especially that construction workers be trained to meet the demands of hotels and homes for the expected tourists. There is a place for small industries but not skilled artisans and there are too many preparing for clerical positions in government employment.

The people in St. Croix are particularly concerned over the present examination system whereby it is possible for children to receive high marks throughout the year but not receive credit for the course if they fail the final director's examination.

The discipline in the schools was severely criticised. The Virgin Islander flogs his child for any infringement of parental rules. He cannot understand the schools' policy of handling discipline cases in line with the modern approach to child psychology. At the same time many people are aware of the bad effect of poor housing on the children.

The almost universal respect and regard for the classroom teacher was gratifying. The criticisms were invariably of policy and not of personnel.

The Curriculum of the Island schools was under serious study by all concerned with education. At present the only courses of study in use were introduced in 1921 in St. Thomas. They were adapted from those of Utah and New Mexico. And St. Croix has used the course of study of Colorado but at present is using none. Mr. Dixon, Superintendent of Schools, stated that they were entirely inadequate and used little. Today text books have become guides for work. In a letter from Mr. Dixon received October 23 he states that a group from the United States Office of Education is about to begin a study of the curriculum in both elementary and secondary schools. Undoubtedly this will lead to changes within the system. This is entirely in line with curriculum studies being quite universally made within the states since the close of World War II.

Observation of the children revealed them to be limited

in their experiences. They did not know the flora or fauna of the islands. They did not know the location of large cities or countries. Outstanding people of the world today were unfamiliar to them. They lacked play experiences either individually or in groups. While they were talented in music there was little evidence of artistic ability in other fields. They were interested in stories but were limited in oral vocabulary. They lacked self-confidence. These children were well-behaved. The criticism of local storekeepers was against normal activity of children everywhere and not delinquency as they implied.

At the present time there is no reliable means of measuring pupil growth in the islands. No tests have yet been standardized in this area. In an environment where children never see trains or large industries, experience no seasonal changes, seldom meet off islanders, they lack experiences that make meaningful the type of test questions we commonly use in the states. From our experiences with the children we would estimate their aptitudes to compare favorably with continental children. Certainly those adults who have had the advantages of education in the states are outstanding men and women.

In conclusion we found many educational problems facing the schools in the Virgin Islands to be those which we ourselves are trying to solve. Much concern is being felt for the slow learner, and the child who is not ready to read. Should sex education be introduced into the schools? How can the parent and the teacher be brought closer together? The problem of adequate financial support for education is so great that it over-shadows every other concern just as it does in many of the states. These are but a few of the obstacles to be removed if real progress is to be made in American education everywhere.

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POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

by Morris F. de Castro, Governor of the Virgin Islands

Since the enactment of the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands in 1936, the people of the islands have been progressing rapidly towards political maturity. Before the passage of the Organic Act the people were stifled from expressing their opinions on public affairs and in selecting their legislative representatives due to income and property qualifications for voting. Before the passage of the Organic Act too, the municipal councils of the Virgin Islands were composed partly of elected members and partly of members appointed by the Government. The chief contribution of the Organic Act to political progress in the islands has been through the establishment of universal suffrage and the creation of wholly elected legislatures. Since 1938 the islanders are eligible to vote on being able to read and write the English language. Virgin Islanders are citizens of the United States. They have a Bill of Rights which includes the basic provisions of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution. They have legislatures which are vested with broad legislative powers. They do not yet elect their own governor, nor do they have the privilege of voting for the President and Vice President of the United States.

In 1936 there were only 1,489 voters in the Virgin Islands. With the first general election held under the liberal provisions of the Organic Act in 1938 the number of voters was considerably increased. In 1948 there were 5,509 registered voters in the islands, and every election year the number is increasing.

Realizing the need for further advancement in self-government, the Legislative Assembly of the Virgin Islands in 1944 created by resolution a committee to study the

Organic Act and recommend revisions. This committee worked vigorously on the assignment for several years, holding public hearings in the three islands and studying every phase of the Act in the light of current local conditions and political aspirations. Included among the recommendations were provisions for a single legislature for the Virgin Islands in place of the three legislatures created in the Organic Act, a single treasury, a resident commissioner to represent the islands in the Congress, and the return to the local treasury of the internal revenue taxes on articles produced in the Virgin Islands and exported to the United States.

The work of the Organic Act Reform Committee was followed up by a referendum on most of these basic questions which was held in 1948. The question of popular election of the Governor was also included in the referendum. Unfortunately, the referendum was held at the same time as the general elections for members to the municipal councils. It is believed that the activities of the political campaign conflicted with and subordinated the issues of the referendum, and resulted in less than 60% of the voters who took part in the general elections casting ballots in the referendum. Thus the returns of the referendum indicated a majority of the voters opposed to all the basic issues of revision, except the provision for a resident commissioner. It is proposed to hold another referendum on these important issues next year.

Considerable progress, nevertheless, has been made in the field of political advancement. In 1950 the first Virgin Islander was appointed Governor by the President of the United States. This is construed as a significant step in recognizing the ability of the people of the Virgin Islands to govern themselves. For several years most of the important positions in the government have been held by qualified Virgin Islanders, and the trend is towards greater local participation.

THE GODMOTHER CONCEPT — ITS PLACE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Carol Kahler

Within continental United States, one looks only to a child's family to discover the status structure of which he is a part. In the Virgin Islands, one looks also to the child's godmother whose influence may overshadow that of his immediate family. The closest relationship between godmother and godchild appears to exist at times of life crises: the naming of the child, when the child makes his first communion, at the time of confirmation or of any other ceremony when the child becomes an adult member of the church, at puberty, and at the time of marriage.

Some informants believe that the godmother concept is dying out. Twenty years ago about 70% of the entire population maintained a close relationship with the godmother, but today the figure is estimated at about 40%. In the islands the importance of the godmother tends to decrease in the higher socio-economic circles, and as individuals discover education as a more certain means of increasing status. From my interviews, however, it would appear that the godmother is still an "important person," and a potential means of raising the status of many in the islands.

W. Lloyd Warner and his associates in "Democracy in Jonesville"¹ cite the following factors that contribute to mobility of social class position: achievement level personal talents, social techniques, status anxiety (wanting to get ahead), adaptive behavior (behavior approved of by one's own class and by the social class above him), and perhaps some emotional deprivation which forces achievement. The godmother in the Virgin Islands is in a position to contribute to the creation of three of these six factors in the life of her godchild: traditionally, social techniques are taught the child by the godmother; the child is disciplined by the

godmother, thus inculcating behavior pleasing to those of her social class; frequently, too, her gifts and the experiences of the child in her home can build status anxiety. It is still not infrequent that money is willed to the godchild by his godmother.

More important than the legacies and the gifts as factors in general mobility, however, are the day by day contacts of the child with the godmother, for here is the magic of association with children of higher social circles. The godchild is expected to spend at least one day a week with the godmothers—often Saturday is the day so designated. It is the godmother's role to teach the child its "manners" to discipline the child when necessary—especially if the child seems not to be properly disciplined at home, to give the child clothes that the parents cannot afford, and to help pay for the child's education when necessary.

Today it is impossible for the godmother to maintain her historic role with each of her godchildren. Women from the upper-middle and upper classes may have many godchildren, but usually the first godchild, and frequently the lighter godchildren are most favored by the godmother. Such selection would certainly be necessary for two of my informants who told of having fifty-five and thirty godchildren respectively.

The following general pattern for selection of the godmother was revealed by one of the informants, and upheld in private interviews by at least four others with whom a discussion of such generalizations would not be threatening.² The pattern was also presented to the entire workshop which contained island teachers, none of whom refuted its existence. However, a careful evaluation of social participation for all informants and their godmothers would be necessary to establish this factor as a part of any index of status classification.³ Its importance here lies only in the fact that it was, to some of the informants, a recognizable pattern, and therefore one that

might be worthy of future study. In the lower economic class, the person chosen as the godmother of the new-born child may be a stranger or mere acquaintance who has higher economic status. The middle-class parents often-times choose as their child's godparent one of higher color, who has equal or higher economic status, and who holds property, for these three factors create social prestige. People of the upper economic group have relatives or close friends as godparents for their children. They must be of equal economic status, and perhaps of higher color.

The close relationship existing between some godchildren and godparents is illustrated by the following statements of informants:

"My godmother was a lonely older woman who brought me up. My parents went away for a while when I was very young, and when they returned my godmother refused to give me back to them."

"My godmother always encouraged me in my studies."

"If your father is not at home, and your mother works, your godmother often has more time to talk to you."

"If I had a problem I would go to my godmother, rather than to my mother for help and advice."

The relationship is not one-sided, for as the godmother aids the child, the child feels a responsibility for the godmother. "Of course I would help my godmother if she ever needed help," was a common statement. One informant labeled the relationship as the godmother's "old-age insurance."

The short time that was available to pursue information concerning the godmother concept has merely served to point up some possibilities for future study: (1) What would an adequate evaluation of social participation reveal concerning the prestige given to having "the right godmother?" (2) Is color a dominant factor in social prestige in the islands? (3) What amount of social status is given to those who have risen via godmother contacts or gifts?

(4) What is the psychological effect of the godmother concept upon the child in terms of parent-child relationships, authority conflicts, etc.? (5) The position of the un-wanted godchild—is it related to that of a servant in the godmother's home?

Armed with the experiences of these six weeks in the islands and a preconceived plan of attack, perhaps some significant study of one of the above problems could be done.

¹ W. Lloyd Warner, "Democracy in Jonesville," Harper and Brothers, 1949.

² Out of a total of forty informants.

³ W. L. Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Ells—"Social Class in America," Chicago, Science Research Associates, 1949.

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PART III: CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, U.S.A.

Pauline Kupcok

The "American Virgins," St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix, have been territorial possessions of the United States since their purchase from Denmark in 1917.

Remote as these islands seem from Europe, their destiny was tied closely with political changes abroad. During more than two centuries of Danish dominance the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands adopted many European cultural values for their own. They looked toward Europe, even though geography and economic survival made them intimately dependent upon America since a century after the islands' settlement. After thirty years of American occupation, this European influence is still strongly felt.

Christopher Columbus, on his second voyage to the New World in 1493, came upon this sea of islands. The Admiral named the island to the south, which he sighted first, Santa

Cruz (now St. Croix) and the group to the north "St. Ursula and her Eleven Thousand Virgins."¹

Some historians have accepted the theory that a party, sent ashore by Columbus, made a landing at Salt River on St. Croix and encountered a band of Carib Indians, fierce aborigines of this area.² Archaeological discoveries at Magen's Bay (St. Thomas) and Salt River (St. Croix) show that at least scattering bands of aborigines from time to time settled on the islands. Caribs on the islands were soon driven away, killed or taken to work in the mines by the Spaniards. As late as 1700 only 4000 Caribs were left on the islands.

The first attempt at colonization was made by the English and Dutch on St. Croix in 1625. After twenty years of comparative harmony the Dutch withdrew from the island following the killing of the English governor in a Dutch residence. Soon after, the English were dispossessed by a Spanish expedition from Puerto Rico. Before long a French contingent from St. Kitts, a neighboring island took possession. The island was passed on to the Knights of Malta in 1651, then to the French West India Company in 1665 and finally to King Louis XIV in 1674. In 1695 the French colonists burned their houses and abandoned the island. For the next thirty-seven years, although France retained legal possession, St. Croix lay uninhabited, a ghost island in the Caribbean.³

In 1733 the Danish West India and Guinea Company purchased the island of St. Croix, largest of the group. The Danes invited neighboring islanders to come and take up land. From St. Kitts, St. Nevis and Antigua came English, Irish and Scotch people. Their descendants live on St. Croix today, but compose only a minority of the population.

St. Thomas receives credit for having the first permanent Danish settlement in 1671. Prior to the Danish, the French, Dutch and English had claimed the island at different times. As early as 1666 the Danes visited St. Thomas, took pos-

session for Denmark and began to build Fort Christian, though it bears the date 1671.

Jorgen Iversen, the first governor arrived on the "Pharaoh" (Fero) in 1672 with ninety-one colonists to take possession. By the time he resigned in 1680 a great number of acres were under cultivation, the fort was completed and named for the reigning monarch, while a town, established on the north side of the harbor, was named Charlotte Amalie for the wife of Christian V. From this settlement descended all later colonies on St. John and St. Croix.⁴

In 1687 Denmark expanded her holdings to include St. John, the smallest of the group, covering twenty square miles. The English had occupied the island, but the exact date of settlement is unknown. Successful settlement was not possible until 1717 because of the hostility of the English operating from their base at Tortola. At this time twenty planters, sixteen slaves and six soldiers from St. Thomas began a settlement. With a plantation economy St. John prospered until the "great insurrection" of 1733.⁵

Denmark's purchase of St. Croix in 1733 completed her expansion in the Caribbean. The Danish West Indies consisting of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix remained under her sovereignty until their American purchase, except for two periods when the British encroached upon the islands. St. John and St. Thomas were captured by the British in April, 1801. In February, 1802 the islands were restored to Denmark only to be repossessed by the British in December, 1807. The British retained control of the islands including St. Croix until 1815, when they again relinquished them to the Danes.⁶

A plantation economy in tobacco, cotton, indigo and sugar was established on the islands from the time of settlement. At first labor consisted of white indentured servants. Under tropical conditions the whites died faster than they could be replaced, so the plantation owners looked to Africa for their labor supply. In 1673 St. Thomas welcomed 103

slaves. By 1680 the population of the island was 175 slave and 156 whites.

From that time on the Negro population was the majority, until today their overwhelming numbers, for ninety percent of the population is Negro and mixed, confuse people into thinking that the Negroes are native to the Virgin Islands. In an ethnological sense, these are not the natives of the islands, for they came after and not before the white men.

The introduction of slavery brought a new, prosperous business to the islands. Negro laborers became the chief factors in the triangular trade, shipping rum to Africa, slaves to the Virgin Islands, molasses to Medford and rum back to Africa. It brought, too, a fear of slave uprisings.

Plantation owners neglected the civilizing influences of religion, education and good nourishment. Threats of torture, branding and execution didn't deter slaves in their bid for freedom. One of the most serious revolts occurred in 1733, when the slaves turned the island of St. John into a battlefield and held it for almost six months. The island was so devastated that for many years it remained practically uninhabited.

The threat of rebellion remained, although the Danes tried to remedy their earlier mistakes by adopting a more benevolent policy toward the end of the eighteenth century. Religious services for Negroes were conducted in the Negro Dutch Creole dialect instead of in Danish. Since the Danes did not teach their slaves the Danish language, the slaves evolved a language based on various African dialects and words from the Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Danish languages. Slave owners used this dialect to communicate with their slaves. Even a few books were translated into it to be used by the slaves. Public school education for some Negroes was introduced in 1787. Included in the decree of 1792, prohibiting the importation and exportation of slaves, were many reforms for the benefit of

the slaves in the Danish West Indies, but they were not adopted.

Peter von Scholten, emancipator, the Abraham Lincoln, of the Virgin Islands was appointed governor in 1827. During his administration many reforms were adopted which improved the lot of the Negro and the colored population. Among the most important that he was instrumental in gaining were:

1. Installation of many Free Colored in government service positions
2. Issuance of a royal decree in 1834 proclaiming full equality between whites and Free Colored
3. Establishment of compulsory public school education in 1839 for slaves as well as for the free
4. Issuance of a royal decree in 1847 providing for the gradual emancipation of the slaves
5. Issuance of an emancipation proclamation by Peter von Scholten in 1848 declaring that "All unfree in the Danish West Indies are from today free."⁷

The emancipation proclamation was made when the slaves marched into Frederiksted on St. Croix and demanded their freedom. Upon announcement of their freedom they went wild and began to burn the island. Great property damage resulted before control was established, but no white person was killed. Governor von Scholten hurriedly resigned and fled from the island. Emancipation ruined the rapidly declining plantation economy and did not give the former slaves economic freedom.

In 1878 another Negro insurrection was organized to protect labor unions. Further economic freedom was sought in the wage strikes of 1916 and 1917. Today, as citizens of the United States, the Virgin Islanders' right to organize is protected by federal law.⁸

For a century and a half, the Virgin Islands had prospered. Today, ruins of magnificent plantations recall an era of wealth gained from exporting cotton, tobacco, sugar and rum, engaging in slave trade, fostering commerce and ship-

ping, and sheltering swash-buckling lawless buccaneers including "Black Beard" and Captain Kidd. By the middle of the nineteenth century this had all but disappeared.

As the years passed the islands became more of a liability than an asset to the Danes, who desperately tried to revive their prosperity by various agricultural experiments and reforms. Each attempt was successful to some extent, but the islands' economy continued to decline. The population decreased rapidly, too. The decline from 1835, when it was at its peak, to 1917 was 39.7 percent.

A Danish investigating commission in 1916 reported the islands' desperate need for improved sanitation, health facilities and numerous economic improvements and made recommendations for such. Denmark thought she could realize a greater profit by selling the islands. The United States, very conscious in wartime of the islands' strategic position in the defense of the Panama Canal, purchased the Danish West Indies for twenty-five million dollars in 1917 after almost fifty years of diplomatic exchanges.

Hustling Americans overturned customs, habits and traditions as they put their rehabilitation program into practice. The transition from Danish to American rule was difficult, especially under a Navy administration, but the first fourteen years of American occupation resulted in improved health, paved roads and improved economic conditions.

In 1931, a transfer of administration to the Department of Interior brought a civil governor to the Virgin Islands. Throughout the New Deal, the islands took on the appearance of a laboratory for economic and political experiments as experts in various fields attempted to solve the problems of our latest acquisition. They have not yet been economically independent.

The Virgin Island people are caught in a period of transition—they are tied closely to their past heritage, but they are looking toward the United States for security and

guidance to insure a more splendid heritage for their children's children. May they keep the best of the past and move forward unafraid into the future toward a three-fold goal —a greater measure of equality and democracy and self-sufficiency.

¹ Jarvis, Antonio. *The Virgin Islands and Their People*. Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1942.

² *Ibid.*

³ Knud-Hansen, Knud. *From Denmark to the Virgin Islands*. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Co., 1947.

⁴ Evans, Luther H. *Ann Arbor, Michigan*: J. J. Edwards, 1945.

⁵ Larsen, Jens. *Virgin Islands Story*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950.

⁶ Jarvis, Antonio. *The Virgin Islands and Their People*. Phil.: Dorrance & Co., 1944.

⁷ Freedom Centennial, 1848-1948. Published in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, V.I.

⁸ See Governmental Documents listed in Bibliography, pages — in this issue.

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DANCING IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Elinor Doryk

The Dance in the Virgin Islands is virtually a mixture of dances and dance movements of the various islands of the West Indies (Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad, Cuba, Puerto Rico) plus old European and African forms of the dance.

The music and dance was an unconscious re-creation by the slaves of their previous manner of life. In their ballads they sang of the hunt, of religious rites, of daily labors, of love, of marriage, of death, and of numerous other subjects depicting their life in the tribe before they were transplanted from Africa to the New World.

In music their basic rhythms were syncopated and polyrhythmic; their basic themes were those of desire and fantasy. Their dream desires were the escape mechanism they employed to forget their new and miserable slave conditions. Their songs fell into two categories, one being the

secular and the other religious. The secular was a light entertaining form of rhythm and song; the religious centered around Christianity with the coming of the Moravians.

In the dances that were brought over, I found that the bamboula and the cariso were most popular. The bamboula, which is rarely done today if at all with authenticity, was a series of love dances. Aside from the dance entertainment point of view, this dance assumed the form of a newspaper done in dance pantomime. That is, the theme of the dance usually depicted a true situation in the lives of the people so that certain situations did prove embarrassing to the people. As a result the people became cautiously aware of their actions and reactions so that they would not become the news of the day. These dances reached a peak where they became obscene and detrimental to the welfare of the community. However, with the advent of time and the progress of communication and more varied means of diversion the energies spent in these forms of the dance were channelled so that they soon lost their hold. It is also true that there was no music to pass on from one generation to another since these songs portrayed specific incidents of people no longer living and therefore relatively unimportant as time passed.

As far as present dance is concerned, I had occasion to see a quadrille danced and accompanied by a "scratch band" when I visited in Christiansted, St. Croix. The quadrille is a square dance of five figures danced in 6/8 and in 2/4 time and popularly done in the 19th century. This dance had been looked upon as a fertility charm by the early primitives of the world. In this particular instance, the dance I saw started as a formation of concentric circles with the women in the inner circle. The band instruments were two guitars, a long pipe-like instrument in the shape of a J, a guiro (gourd for scraping sounds), one flute, and a triangle. In addition, there was a dance caller to direct the figures. The dance step used was a shifting of weight from one foot to another.

in rhythm to the band and this was done throughout the dance. The dancers saluted each other and then began the figure which was done in place with the weight shifting step. In the second the couples joined hands and circled right and then left. In the third they alternately clapped their hands and stamped their feet. Then the second figure was repeated. Lastly the inner circle moved counter clockwise and the outer circle moved clockwise so that there was an exchange of partners. The dance ended by a whistle blown by the caller two measures before the end.

Though the dancers represented the older people their movements were not lacking in suppleness, grace, or rhythm. The women had chosen to wear white blouses with plaid skirts and headdresses. This seemed to signify a oneness and sameness. The men wore their usual clothes plus their hats.

Another old form of the dance that is infrequently done, which I unfortunately did not see, is the quadrille à la cour or the lancier's dance. This dance appears to have been done in Ireland about 1817. It is a set of quadrilles of certain arrangement with its own particular music. These dances have not been recorded in any form and may die out completely as the younger generation is naturally attracted to the fads of the times.

Today the music and dances that are popular are the bolero, calypso, and mambo; the rhumba seems to be suffering a setback at the impact of the mambo. These have had their beginnings in Spain and Puerto Rico, the United States, and Trinidad respectively. The origin of the mambo is not an established one as yet. However, it appears to have begun in the dance places of New York City.

It was invaluable to me to see the dances and to speak to the people who had information concerning the dance. I would like to give credit especially to Mr. Charles Emmanuel of the Diamond Hill School in St. Croix for the information about the early Negro dances.

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MUSIC IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS*

Emmabelle S. Boyles

Virgin Islands—the very words themselves, whether written or spoken bring a different remembrance to each one of us, who during the summer of 1950 spent six weeks there. These memories may fade, but not so with the music, the intervallic and rhythmical peculiarities everywhere present gave a charm and graceful melody, that to many of us Music and Virgin Islands are synonymous terms.

EVIDENCES OF MELODIC AND RHYTHMICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

TYPES.

The rhythms the Negroes brought from Africa were carried into Spain, Cuba and other Islands, thence into the United States. Finally these rhythms dominated the entire dance world. One example will suffice. "The Charleston" of Miller and Lyles carries as its dominant rhythmic pattern the Habenera type.

The *basic* rhythm, the prototype of which is exemplified in the Habanera came from Africa and is indigeneous to

the Virgin Islands. The Habanera, derived from the word Havana, is the blending of the basic African rhythm wedded to Spanish melody.

This *basic* rhythm can easily be traced in all the rhythmic variants peculiar to this type. Whether the Conga, Rhumba and Son of Cuba, the Tango of Argentina, the Brazilian Carioca and Samba, the Bambula of Santa Domingo, the popular Calypso of Trinidad, as well as the Meringue and other dances of the West Indies, all can be traced to this basic African drum rhythm.

The difference in the various rhythmic patterns results naturally from diversified backgrounds — words or language of the dominant peoples under whom the early slaves were subjected.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS IN MUSIC OF VIRGIN ISLANDS.

In studying the music of the Virgin Islands we must take cognizance of the fact that neither the slaves of the Virgin Islands nor any of the other West Indian Islands have produced in their music the depth, simplicity and loftiness of expression which make up the songs and music of the only group of people whose music boasts a spontaneous, harmonic support to its melody—the American Negro slaves of the South.

The Virgin Island slave music lacks the deep emotional value so dominant in the spirituals of his American brothers. He was never so heavily crushed under the burden of slavery that his emotions felt the need of spiritual outlet as a relief from tragedies of slave life. However, the West Indian Negro was forcibly made to abandon any natural urge of a distinct religious utterance, and to accept the religious training of the gospel under educated ministers of orthodox denominations such as Moravians, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Wesleyan Methodists and Anglicans.

According to Knox's History, in reference to slavery in

the Virgin Islands, the slaves "Were forbidden to hold feast and drum dances, heathenish customs brought with them from Africa." Even in the face of the fact that the Danish masters attempted to suppress the drum dances they were secretly perpetuated. The result was a dance constructed on a plane of sensuous pleasure lacking the ethical idealism which is characterized in the American Negro spiritual.

FORMS.

A song and dance still used in St. Croix is the Curacoa, Mackshun and Masquerades. These types of dances have come down from the old plantation days of the island. St. Thomas makes use of the Curacoa and Bamboula. All of the forms have come from the basic rhythm exemplified in the African root Habanera and express not the song of slaves, but of freedmen either from plantation St. Croix or commercial St. Thomas.

For the accompaniment of the Curacoa and Mackshun the players sit astride the drum, with backs together, each player using a stick. The position would be the same for the Bamboula except that one of the players uses two sticks. In both cases the hand is used to vary the sound, which makes a weird and at times magical rhythmic effect.

The Contradance and Meringue are outgrowths of these dances, having as their accompaniment the ensemble of guitar, flute, accordion and guiro. The guiro is a dried gourd usually played by scraping a stiff wire on lines drawn across its smooth surface.

MUSIC AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ARE INSEPARABLE.

Its wide range is to be found from the humblest dwelling and condition to the pinnacle of artistic culture. The fact that the music like other arts or other forms of mental activity is subject to the law of development and that its roots lie deep in human souls, is strikingly proven even in the demonstrativeness of its crudity, commensurate with the development of the people concerned.

Music today as an art in the Virgin Islands seems to outshine the other arts such as poetry, painting and architecture, because it is truly the art of the people, the most sociological of all the arts. From the physical to the spiritual stage it stands out in bold relief. In the former it stimulates animation, excitement, energy as demonstrated in the Calypso; in the latter is found calm, repose and rest. Music in the Virgin Islands is peculiarly adapted to the various emotional shadings and expression of its people, and therefore must be an important and influential sociological reason for its existence.

Notwithstanding that the singular power of music among the natives is a recognized fact, its cause is strange to say, unexplained in philosophical investigation of art in general, and music in particular. When its sociological value has been aesthetically and clearly defined and explained, we may be able to know the reason why this power and this wide appeal.

Professor Britan, in his usual and authoritative manner, says in his "Philosophy of Music": "An art that begins far back in the obscurity of the earliest forms of racial progress; and is present as a factor of increasing importance through the long ages of development to the best outcome of ethnic progress; an art that finds an immediate and a forceful response from men in every land and in every stage of mental growth and education; an art so versatile that it can arouse and stimulate almost every emotion of the human heart and with such dramatic power; an art that in its highest artistic form is worthy to be classed with the best expression of man's aesthetic consciousness: such an art is really not ephemeral or insignificant, but must send its roots deep into the heart of man's mental constitution and stands related to the basic forms of consciousness itself."

The late Governor Paul M. Pearson must have recognized the significance of music and its sociological value for the Virgin Island People when he established the music

festival as a part of the municipal life of the community during his term of office. He realized that it was a means of gathering people from all points of the Island and from all walks and conditions of life for a pleasant exchange from everyday routine.

According to the files of the St. Thomas newspaper "The Bulletin" of October 24, 1941, the music festival was a great success. "The public performance of a popular light opera was given on a big scale which proved an instantaneous success from the standpoint of community enrichment and spiritualization— "It was a sane and worthwhile effort made to awaken, enliven and vitalize a people in a sense of developing the power of the citizen under the domain of ordinary circumstances into an unusual form of expression."

Even a casual visitor in the Islands would note the language and customs of the people reflected in their music which as a vehicle of emotion possesses a tremendous potency. Life in the Islands is richer and better because of this music. It is to the Virgin Islander like a fourth need, food, shelter, clothing, then music. In the words of Addison, "It awakes the soul and lifts it high."

* Mr. Alton Adams, well known band leader of the Islands, gave me guidance and advice.

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"NO MORE KALALLUE"

IMPRESSIONS OF THE FOOD HABITS, PRODUCTION, AND MARKETING IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, U.S.A.

Irene M. Wojtowicz

Near the center of town on St. Thomas, is the old open market place, where the friendly native women sit all day long with their wares. Here you will see the straps of bright-hued fish with such odd names: hog-fish, angel or madam fish, bonito, doctor-fish, jew-fish, old wife, yellow-tail, blue fish, etc. They are strung on straps made of native heavy grass and reed and the price goes down with the sun, being highest in the morning, when the fish are ocean-fresh. The town boasts a modern market, but the government, with characteristic kindness, hesitates to tear down the old one, knowing it would be a sad day for the market-women.

Fishing is both a sport and an industry in the Virgin Islands. Everyone, from the young to the old, fish. The local boys patronize the numerous lovely beaches employing the spearing method, getting some swimming at the same time. Then, taking the bus home, they find opportunity to strike bargains with housewives at almost every stop. The fish, in the meantime, add more color to the scene while hanging out the bus window and flapping in the brisk tradewinds.

More seriously, the French folk on the island make fishing a part of earning their living. It is natural for the French people to take to fishing as it is believed they are descendants of Bretons who came to the Virgin Islands more than a hundred years ago. These people have established a village near the harbor where they have maintained a culture separate from other Islanders. One is amply repaid for a sunrise visit to the beach, when the fishermen arrive and with concerted and graceful effort draw yards

and yards of handmade nets to dry on the beach. Local material is used in making these nets as well as the numerous "fish pots" or traps.

Picturesque it is, indeed, but alas, fishing is only an infant industry with one sixth of the needs of the population being supplied. Strangely, local preference seems to be for canned salmon rather than fresh porgies; or as the popular Calypso song goes: "No more kalallue, just give me raw codfish." Kalallue is a delectable native dish combining the odd assortment of pig tail, ham bone, spareribs, land crab, and kalallue leaf, which resembles spinach closely.

Kallalue is traditional for New Year's Eve and the preparation of it takes on the air of a spree. It isn't a dish one whips up lightly and carelessly in one day. A few days before the actual preparation of kalallue, the youngsters are sent out at night with lighted pine torches to catch the land crabs, which then are kept penned in barrels to be fattened up. In the meantime, the other ingredients are readied. Since West Indian food is highly seasoned, the spices and herbs play an important part in the creation of Kalallue. Among these: thyme, "Papa Lolo", a shrub, and a local spinach called "manbower", are used. For vegetables, there are tannia leaves, huge, like elephant ears, spinach, diced okras, spring onions, tomatoes, fresh peppers, and a few sweet potatoes. The herbs and spinach are boiled until tender and then taken out and chopped in a bowl. The okras, diced, are mixed in and everything green is cooked with the fish and meats until very thick. An important accompaniment is Old St. Croix Rum or a highly spiked lime punch.

In contrast to the French fishermen, another group of French colonists has settled high up in the hills on the northern side of the island of St. Thomas. The French, with characteristic industry, set to work to cultivate the sparse soil on the unbelievably steep slopes. Farming here is, of necessity, of the terraced type, but on a miniature scale. The shallow soil, huge boulders, and frequent

droughts present problems of gigantic nature to the hard-working French farmer. Added to these obstacles is also the one of marketing. It takes a laden donkey many hours to travel the narrow, steep, hilly roads to the town market. On reaching the market, the farmer faces serious competition from Tortola, a British owned island nearby, and from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The crop is a varied one. Bananas are common, especially plantain, a cooking variety, and many other fruits bearing exotic, exciting names: soursop, mango, mamee, papaya, sweetlime, tamarind, guava, and genep. This last one grows within easy plucking distance for the passerby on any road and certainly the children take advantage of this.

Among the vegetables are found tannias, of kalallue fame, tropical tubers which taste like potatoes and are used in soups, sweet potatoes, pigeon peas, yams, and cassava. Very little corn is grown on the island due to the high incidence of disease and pests, and yet cornmeal is used to make a native dish called "foenchi" in the Creole language. It is really a bread substitute but the native considers it a meal or the chief part of the meal. They even float it in kalallue like dumplings.

Rice, along with cornmeal, is also a staple of the island diet. "Arroz con Pollo", of nearby Puerto Rican influence, is a favorite, with the poor of the island substituting crab for the chicken. Indeed, according to a local saying: "Crab and rice is very nice."

The island's meat supply comes chiefly from San Juan, on the hoof, to be slaughtered on the spot. The few cattle found in the Islands are of the Zebu type, an Indian strain, which withstands the heat of the tropics. Unfortunately, this type produces milk with a low fat content, making cream very scarce.

As for beverages, the cane rum is for export consumption primarily, the native having his two specialties; Guavaberry Rum and Maubi for himself. The first is a Christmas

season "must" being made from a native berry. The Maubi is a combination of a tree bark and spices, which after fermenting for a few hours, is served iced making a refreshing drink.

In general, and to summarize, food is relatively high in the Islands due to a combination of reasons; difficult agriculture, drought, and the necessity of importing most of the food.

Going as a member of a Workshop to the Virgin Islands, made it possible to realize some of the underlying causes of the present day problems—which sometimes were of a psychological aspect and then again perhaps had an historical background. After making friends among the Islanders, it was not difficult to have a better understanding of their way of life.

The story of kalallue is from a manuscript by J. Antonio Jarvis, St. Thomas, V. I.

Irene Wojtowicz, Home Economics Teacher in High School, Buffalo, N.Y.

UNCLE SAM'S CARIBBEAN OUTPOST

Lew Arthur

If you were to take a grassgreen rug and bunch it up from all sides, it would look like the view of the Virgin Islands from the air: great ravines ripping the sides of volcanic mountains, rolling land bright with tropic flowers and sleepy beaches of clean white sand.

With the trade winds blowing all the time it's seldom hot in the summer and never cold in the winter: the kind of moderate climate you might expect to find in Paradise.

Columbus discovered the Caribbean islands on his second voyage to America in 1493, and later Ponce de Leon searched for the Fountain of Youth there. With their base the Virgins' thousand hidden coves and inlets, pirates such as fierce Edmund Teach, otherwise known as Blackbeard,

preyed on treasure-laden Spanish galleons on the way to the mother country from the colonies in Mexico and South America.

Alexander Hamilton, American patriot and natural son of James Hamilton and Rachal Levine, clerked in St. Croix as a youth. Painter Camille Pissarro, a leader of the French school of Light worshippers, and Judah Benjamin, member of Jefferson Davis's cabinet of the Confederacy, were other Islanders who became celebrated.

The Virgins also produced a host of keen and brave men who set their people free from human bondage, fifteen years before Lincoln declared his Emancipation Proclamation.

But if you were to seek for the one thing that sets this small community of 26,654 apart more than all its history, art or splendid ruins, it might be found in the day-to-day wellbeing of the people, for, if their climate is like that of Paradise, Islanders are the sort of people you might meet in Paradise. They are charming, natural and gregarious.

Predominantly Negro with an admixture of Carib, Dutch, Spanish, French, English, Danish and American, natives hold the highest positions in trade, commerce, politics, government and, indeed, in all walks of life. If any lines are drawn they are stepped across too frequently and nimbly to be clear.

The Virgin Islands chief executive is Governor Morris F. de Castro, appointed by President Truman in March, 1950, as the first native governor of these islands. Tall, modest-speaking de Castro, who is a youthful forty-eight and recalls with pride his Portuguese-Jewish ancestry, began his public career as an office boy. Popular with islanders, the governor held open house in Charlotte Amalie, the capital city, on the occasion of his inaugural reception — usually a very stiff and formal affair. There was no hesitation on the part of everyone, — market women, cane workers, cab drivers, and other citizens of this exceptional Ca-

ribbean melting pot to come up to Mr. de Castro, shake his hand and tell him what was on their mind. Many knew the governor by his first name.

The tropical garden islands which Governor de Castro administers have a notorious past as a slave trading mart. After a varied colonial ownership, the Virgins were bought from Denmark in 1917 for \$25,000,000 as a defense outpost for the Panama Canal. The islands' strategic position astride principal Atlantic trade lanes made them invaluable as a US base during War II.

The Islands operate on an annual budget of about \$2,000,000, approximately one-third of which is contributed by Congress in a deficit appropriation. Only during the war years, when the native sugar-and-rum trade thrived, did the public income adequately support all branches of local government.

Gov. de Castro's objective is a self-balancing budget which will free the people of their dependence on Federal funds. The governor told the writer that the Islands were working towards the goal of self sufficiency through tourism and an increased use of vast tracts of land now held in an undeveloped stage by companies and private individuals.

Politically the Virgin Islands are a fully organized territory of the United States. Two municipal councils, one for St. Thomas and St. John and the other for St. Croix, are popularly elected. The councils meet jointly as the Legislative Assembly, enacting laws for the islands as a whole.

Islanders cherish their freedom. The Legislative Assembly, mindful of certain practices of segregation introduced by the tourist trade to this tropic garden of tolerance, recently passed what is considered the strongest social civil rights measure under the U. S. flag.

The Virgin Islands practice direct, open democracy that is a model for the Caribbean area. When the councilmen of St. Thomas were dissatisfied with a recent governmental order, they called a public meeting in the Charlotte Amalie

market square. The town turned out en masse and the elected legislators gave their "report to the people." A gathering like this would be unheard of in neighboring British-owned Tortola. In fact, the people of that British-administered island not long ago petitioned for a transfer to U. S. dominion.

The writer asked a native market woman, Lady Williams, a seventy-two year old seller of spices, why she so diligently attended every meeting of the Legislative Assembly when it convened in St. Thomas.

"I want to know what my government is up to," Lady Williams said, proudly possessive of her rights. "Under the Danish rule there was lots of talk about liberty, but now we really do have it!"

As in many other pieces of legislation the Virgins were overlooked when the Selective Service Act was passed during War II. But Islanders campaigned so vigorously, Congress was required to extend the Act to include them.

Natives long wanted to be in the American family and strove towards this goal for fifty years before their transfer. After thirty-three years under the flag they are unanimous in their desire to remain Americans.

There are no immigration restrictions between the Islands and the States. Islanders go to the States for their higher education and others migrate and stay. It is said that there are more thousands of St. Thomians in New York than are presently in all of St. Thomas!

One reason for this migration is the depressed state of agriculture on these riverless, rain-dependent Caribbean islands.

The agricultural prosperity of over one hundred years ago which supported a population nearly double the present, was based on a slave economy. Until the people won their freedom, the islands were cultivated from the beaches to the hilltops. In addition to sugar cane, long staple cotton and vegetables were important crops.

Today less than 7% of the Islands' 132 square miles is under cultivation. While thousands of acres of rich volcanic soil are reclaimed by the semi-tropical jungle, cattle and vegetables are imported from nearby Puerto Rico and the British West Indies. Land on St. Thomas begins at \$500 per acre—when it is available.

The slavequarter is everywhere symbolic of a bygone era. Few of the natives will lend themselves to the tough grind of agricultural work on land that is not their own. Puerto Ricans must be imported to do this low-paid type of tenant farming.

An example of intelligent application of the land to the needs of the community is demonstrated by Mr. Cory Bishop, manager of a truck farm on St. John. Beside making full use of the island's average yearly rainfall of 46 inches, Bishop irrigates his fields by means of an 80,000 gallon reservoir which is fed by an artesian well and constantly kept filled by forced pumps. The water is led to the plant beds by means of gravity. As a result of this method of irrigation, Mr. Bishop, a college-trained farmer from the Midwest, is able to ship weekly supplies of tomatoes, carrots, lettuce and other fresh vegetables to the town market in Charlotte Amalie and sell them profitably at competitive prices. Demand for such products far exceeds the supply.

St. Croix, 40 miles and 20 air-minutes south of St. Thomas, is the largest and, agriculturally, the most important of the Virgins. Ancient Danish colonial buildings, massive stone wind-mill towers and manor house ruins, the remains of once prosperous estates, dot the countryside, between its two towns of Christensted and Frederiksted, situated on either end of the island.

St. John, the smallest of the three islands, is also the most unspoiled. Its 747 people live contentedly in a simple manner, depending on subsistence farming for their livelihood. St. Thomas, where the cruise ships dock, is busy with shops

and bars to amuse the visitor. St. Croix's 84 square miles of pastoral geography is mainly given over to its onecrop sugar economy. It is the base of the Virgin Islands Company.

When VICO (Virgin Islands Company) was established by Congress in 1934, the people of St. Croix were being fed by the Red Cross.

The sugar industry had collapsed as a result of hurricanes, drought and competing world markets that could produce the cane more cheaply. With this collapse came unemployment and hunger.

Sugarlands and a distillery, purchased with Federal relief funds, were turned over to VICO. The national government figured that a revival of the sugar and rum industry was a better alternative to Red Cross aid or straight relief.

Until a year ago when losses on the costly sugar operation could be recouped by the manufacture of "Government House" rum, the Company was paying for itself. But Congress put VICO out of the profitable rum business by passing Public Law 149 which prohibits Federal-sponsored agencies from manufacturing drinking alcohol.

This has been the most productive cane year since the establishment of VICO and its successor, VICORP, the Virgin Islands Corporation, which includes on its board of directors Governor de Castro and two U. S. cabinet members. The estimated yield for 1950 will be 96,000 tons of cane. Despite the record crop the average yield of cane from the fields of St. Croix has been only one-third that of Puerto Rico and Cuba, leading competitors, and VICORP's deficit is expected to run over \$300,000 for 1950.

Mr. de Castro told the writer that the Corporation was working to increase the cane quota to 150,000 tons in order to make the industry pay for itself.

"It can be done by increasing the water table of the island of St. Croix, and by modern methods of cultivation," the

governor stated.

In spite of present losses, the Interior Department's Administrator for St. Croix, Mr. Harry E. Taylor, estimated that the Federal Treasury receives a return of 95% of the monies it might otherwise have to spend for relief of the unemployed, were the Corporation's sugar mills to shut down.

Cane workers receive 30 cents an hour during the 4 to 7 month season.

Labor in the Virgin Islands is lowpaid by U. S. standards. On St. Thomas workers are paid a bare minimum due only to the efforts of the Municipal Council in introducing a wage and hour law. Unskilled workers on St. Croix make as little as 15 cents per hour. Labor's problems are aggravated by the high cost of living.

While the moderate year-round temperature, ranging from a winter evening's low of 69 degrees to a summer's day high of 91, makes it unnecessary for islanders to have winter clothing and heating, the general living index is 35% above that of Washington, D. C., the highest on the continent.

Much of what is worn and eaten is imported. The cost of freight and handling is added to mainland costs. A recent survey indicated that imported food costs on an average of 61% more than in Washington, D. C. Lower costs on the insufficient supply of locally produced meats, fruits and vegetables do not offset this huge differential.

Labor's standards are further depressed by the influx of immigrants from Tortolla. Tortollans, used to British colonial standards, work for even less money. There is a formality of registering with U. S. Immigration authorities every 29 days, but many are admittedly here illegally, undercutting established living and wage levels.

The average family income on the island of St. Thomas is \$430 a year and on St. Croix it is \$339. In St. Thomas, it is less than $\frac{1}{4}$ the median family income of small South-

ern cities of the United States, while in St. Croix it is less than 1/5th.

In such an economy aid to the needy falls far below what Americans would consider the minimum required for a subsistence standard of living. In one recent month the average relief grant in the Islands was \$5.90 per person—or 19½ cents a day. Aid for dependent children came to \$3.63 a month or 12 cents a day — in itself hardly enough to feed and clothe a growing child!

Considering these figures, it seems startling that there is no real hunger in the Virgins.

Mr. George Simmonds, Administrator of the island of St. John, explains it best when he says: "Each family has an acre or halfacre to cultivate potatoes, tomatoes or bananas for their own needs. Each family man owns a family fish trap. Every native will have a few chickens or goats. When there is no work in the cane fields, no road-building or home construction, the native will do a little basket-weaving or burn a little charcoal or sell a few eggs or surplus fish for some needed cash."

In addition, the Insular Government of the Islands through its program of school lunches, insures that every child beside being educated to his sixteenth year, will receive at least one nourishing meal a day.

All of the Virgin Islanders reflect the sunny unharassed atmosphere of their environment. While he may live in a shack or lean-to which merely serves to keep the sun and rain off him, he is personally clean, healthy and independent. He does not consider himself the victim of poverty. Perhaps this is because the seas around teem with a hundred varieties of fish, and fifty kinds of tropical fruit may be had for the picking. But much of the Islander's strength, dignity and ease springs from deep inner resources — his self-acceptance, his pride in being alive and free in a kind of Paradise world.

Lew Arthur is a free lance writer.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE THROUGH RECIPES

Jane McCallum

A society's culture, we are told, is reflected in its food pattern. As a nutrition major I was interested in the food habits of the people of the Virgin Islands, especially in the changes that have taken place since the days of the large plantations. It soon became clear that one way to approach my problem was to collect recipes—the recipes that Islanders have borrowed from other cultures and with native skill have made into their own. The market place in Charlotte Amalie suggested itself as a starting place. It was a fortunate choice for to the early market come French farmers bringing their produce for sale, the French fishermen with their morning catch, and the market women who are ready to help the stranger. Just ask the name of a fruit, vegetable, or herb; what seasonings should be used to give an exotic flavor to certain dishes; the herbs to be used in food or for healing—seldom is it necessary to ask how the article is to be prepared because the information is forthcoming with the name and a bit of folklore on the best method to prevent illness for all time! It was here in the market that many friends were made and my recipe book began to take form.

Through Philip, the French basketmaker I learned of the French cooking still practised in Carenage, an isolated village on St. Thomas. The people are a hard working, frugal lot and the meager living they manage to wrest from the sea is supplemented by the sale of hats, bags, and placemats woven from dried palm leaves by women and children. These people have lived in a self-imposed isolation—economic, social, religious, and psychological—for several generations, and are unlike the people of modern France in dress, language, diet and customs. The family does not sit down together to eat but individuals squat on stools or on the doorstep with their plates at irregular hours. There are

no beds but each member of the household has a string hammock that is strung up at night. The principal food is fish, fungi (similar to cornmeal mush) soups, and teas made from native plants.

In contrast to the French community in Carenage, the French colony of farmers on the north side of the island of St. Thomas are tall, well-built, healthy appearing people. Their farming income is augmented by fishing and their diet is better balanced consisting of fish and fungi supplemented by fruits, vegetables, milk and eggs.

Turtles, once the food for kings only, are available to everyone on the islands. On the island of St. John, Mrs. Keating gave me her special recipe for turtle steaks. This is indeed a dish for the gourmand. Pigeon pea soup is another favorite dish and is said to possess magical power. It is called "come-again" soup and the visitor to the Islands who eats it is sure to return again. The native women are good cooks with the gift of seasoning their dishes to give variety to their menus. Another one of their specialties is *parfey*, a highly seasoned meat, fish and vegetable soup thickened with cornmeal, and the women on the island of St. Croix delight in making both *parfey* and fish pudding, a marine version of angel food. Kallalue plays an important part in the food habits of the Islanders. It is a thick, nourishing soup—a meal in itself, and there are as many ways to prepare it as there are cooks on the Islands.¹ Kallalue is made with spinach bower (*amaranthus dubuis*), okra, thyme, celery, parsley, ham, hambone, pig's tail, fried fish, crabs or conch, red hot pepper pod, and then it is further seasoned with a combination of spices and is finally served with balls of fungi.² It is always served to family and guests at the Christmas season and on New Year's Eve. It is said that those who eat Kallalue on New Year's Eve are assured of good luck in the coming year.

Collecting recipes is indeed an excellent way to come to know the people and to learn their customs and beliefs. To

take part in doing the dishes or clearing the table may cause merriment in the household but soon one is allowed to help in cooking and friendships begin.

¹ See the article in this issue, "No More Kallalue," by Irene B. Wojtowicz.

² Fungi is sometimes spelled *fungee* or *foengi*.

Miss Jane McCallum is working toward her Ph.D., in Home Economics at New York University.

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Many of the libraries in the Continental United States offer only a limited number of references on the American Virgin Islands. Furthermore, it is believed that recent publications on the islands have not been compiled since 1941. This bibliography is an attempt to supplement the comprehensive work of Charles F. Reid's "Bibliography of the Virgin Islands of the United States" published nine years ago. Mr. Reid's work involved a painstaking and exhaustive examination of books, manuscripts, periodicals and government documents. Leading librarians in the United States, the West Indies, Central and South America, cooperated and hundreds of other trained workers gave valuable service in this momentous task.

Students who may wish to do an intensive study in the Islands will find this recent compilation completed in the summer of 1950 especially helpful since most of the works listed are available locally in the public libraries of Charlotte Amalie, Christiansted and Fredericksted. Some books published before 1941 have been listed because they seem to have a particular place of importance in the study of the social Anthropology of the Islands. In many cases the references have been annotated; in others, the titles explain the book content; while in others the bibliographic detail was intentionally omitted.

The Workshop is indebted to the librarians in the Islands who gave assistance and made the reserve files available for study.

Adona R. Sick.

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